

NOVENA TO THE MARTYRS FOR THOSE HURT BY RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS DAY 1

We remember the Jesuit Martyrs' ardent love for the Indigenous people.

But in contrast, the survivors of Indian Residential Schools tell us how they were badly hurt by government, by missionaries, and by lay helpers some 300 years later. Why and how did this happen?

We gather to ask the Jesuit Martyrs to help us to acknowledge truth, to take steps toward reconciliation, and to move forward in hope.

Theme: Let the Little Children Come to Me

We meet St. Jean de Brébeuf
In 1625 Jean de Brébeuf asked to come to Canada to share the Good News of the Gospel with the people of New France. He marvelled at the expansive beauty of the land and fell in love with the Huron people. He learned their language and culture, compiled a dictionary and translated a catechism for them. Though the Hurons knew nothing about Jesus, he saw in them a natural and strong feeling for God. He zealously tried to teach them about Jesus and baptism.

Brébeuf loved the Hurons. He said they were very intelligent, and they were good orators and good logical thinkers. They were good businessmen. They were very hospitable and had good manners. They had very organized Council Meetings. They held lavish feasts with lots of food and dancing to effect the cure of illnesses. And most especially, they had a sense of the spiritual, one might say an openness to God.

We listen to Phyllis Webstad

When I was 6 years old, the day before I had to leave for residential school, my grandmother said “Tomorrow you will start school at the St. Joseph’s Residential School. So today we can go to the General Store to buy a new shirt for school. You can have any shirt you want.” In the store, my eyes caught sight of a bright orange shirt with a lace tie in the front. I said, “It is bright and exciting, just like I feel about starting school.” The next morning, I put on that orange shirt. I was so proud of it. I was ready for when the Indian agent came to take me away. When I arrived at school, right away they stripped me of my clothing, and I never saw the orange shirt again. “I cried because:

- My feelings didn’t matter
- No one cared
- I felt like I was worth nothing

- All of us little children were crying, and no one cared.
 - I was no longer excited about school.
 - I had 300 more sleeps to put in until I could go home.
 - No one listened to us. We did not matter.
- I have struggled ever since with a sense of worthlessness & insignificance. I gave birth to my son when I was not even 14 years old. I finally went into treatment for healing when I was 27 to deal with issues of feeling worthless and insignificant. Sometimes, I still feel that I don’t matter, but slowly I am getting over it. I told my story to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2012.

We remember Jesus:

A reading from the Gospel According to Matthew:

Little children were being brought to Jesus in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them; but Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.” And he laid his hands on them and went on his way.
(Mt 19.13-15)

We pray in silence:

We repent:

We acknowledge that we have benefited and continue to benefit from what was done to the Indigenous Peoples of this land. We acknowledge **that we belong to the group of settlers who were invited on to this land by the Indigenous peoples who had inhabited it for thousands of years before we arrived, and then who took the land from our Indigenous hosts and put them on small parcels of land called “Reserves”.**

We have benefited and continue to benefit from what was done to the Indigenous Peoples of this land.

We repent and with the Prodigal Son we say,

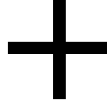
“Father, we have sinned against heaven and before you. We are no longer worthy to be called your sons and daughters; treat us like your hired hands.”

We Pray for Reconciliation:

We know that Reconciliation must go beyond verbal apologies to a just action, to respectful relationships, and when possible, to friendship. We ask St. Jean de Brébeuf and Companions to help us by their prayers to God for us and for the Indigenous people for whom they gave their lives.

Let us pray:

Father you consecrated the first beginnings of the faith in North America by the preaching and martyrdom of Saints John and Isaac and their companions. By the help of their prayers may the Christian Faith continue to grow throughout the world. We ask this in Jesus’ name.



Divine Praises

Blessed be God,
Blessed be His Holy Name,
Blessed be Jesus Christ,
true God, and true man,
Blessed be the name of Jesus,
Blessed be his most Sacred Heart,
Blessed be his most Precious Blood,
Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar,
Blessed be the Holy Spirit the Paraclete,
Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most holy,
Blessed be Saint Joseph, patron of the Martyrs,
Blessed be Saint Jean de Brébeuf,
Blessed be Saint Isaac Jogues,
Blessed be Saint Gabriel Lalemant,
Blessed be Saint Antoine Daniel,
Blessed be Saint Charles Garnier,
Blessed be Saint Noël Chabanel,
Blessed be Saint René Goupil,
Blessed be Saint Jean de Lalande,
Blessed be Saint Kateri Tekakwitha,
Blessed be holy man Joseph Chiwatenhwa,
Blessed be God in His angels and his saints.